



CHESAPEAKE CHAMBER MUSIC INTERLUDE

2012 GALA: RHAPSODY IN BLUE



Adam Birnbaum, jazz pianist

by Laurie Keegan Wishing it was *Summertime* - and the living was easy? Shoo away those winter blues with a bit of Gershwin. Chesapeake Chamber Music will present "*Rhapsody in Blue*, a Gershwin concert" at 6:00 pm at Easton's historic Avalon Theatre, followed by the Gala cocktail party, dinner and auctions at the Tidewater Inn on Saturday, March 3. You'll have *Plenty o' Nuttin'* if you miss this highly anticipated evening.

The concert features jazz pianist Adam Birnbaum and jazz vocalist Carolyn Leonhart. Since graduating in 2003 from Jazz Studies at the Juilliard School, Adam Birnbaum has become



Carolyn Leonhart, jazz vocalist

increasingly prominent performing as a sideman and as a leader in jazz clubs and festivals around the world. Carolyn Leonhart was a voice major at the famed LaGuardia High School for Music and The Arts, where she spent her days as the featured vocalist in their award winning gospel choir and her evenings working on jazz standards with her father noted jazz bassist Jay Leonhart. Carolyn has provided harmony vocal work for Steely Dan and she has been a guest vocalist on several instrumentalists' albums including an album with her husband saxophonist Wayne Escoffery.

Chesapeake Chamber Music Competition Slated for March 31

by Debra Crouch The 2012 Chesapeake Chamber Music Competition has announced the five finalists for our upcoming competition, which will be held starting at 1:00 p.m. at the Avalon Theatre on Saturday, March 31. A preliminary judges' panel of eight noted musicians headed by CCM Artistic Director J. Lawrie Bloom, evaluated the anonymous CDs of the 41 qualified applicants from all

quarters of the US and Canada. The average age of each ensemble totaled less than 31 years, and applicants as young as 21 participated. See the finalists on Page 3.

J. Lawrie Bloom stated, "Each year that we have held the competition we on the preliminary panel have the happy opportunity to hear many excellent chamber groups from around the country, and beyond.

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Following the concert, a sumptuous gala awaits across the street at the Tidewater Inn. A generous cocktail hour puts you in the party mood with drinks and fabulous noshes. Silent auction items await your consideration. Some featured items are "**Blue Bowl**", a framed oil still life by Sally Kagan; a **Bartlet Pear Inn cooking class with chef Jordon Lloyd**; a **golf outing with lunch for four**; **Waterman for a Day with Captain Mark Connolly**; a **reproduction bronze Remington sculpture**; a **three night stay in New York City with gift card to Dizzy's Jazz Club**; **personal trainer sessions by Gina Adams, Board Certified Personal Trainer/Nutrition Specialist**; **tour and dinner at a local private wine cellar**; and the ever popular **Wine Store**. **Live auction items include trips to New Orleans, Whistler, and Carmel, California**; a **sailing race aboard an Americas Cup Yacht in San Diego Bay**, and a **gorgeous oil painting, "Sunset Sail" by Karen Mathis**. If you're the winning bid you'll be crowing *They Can't Take That Away From Me!*

The Gala, generously underwritten by Wye Financial and Trust in partnership with Gilman Hill Asset Management, is chaired by Chloe Pitard, ably supported by a volunteer committee. Gala proceeds benefit music appreciation and education in our community with subsidized tickets during the CCM Festival each June, and our YouthReach programs in Talbot County and Dorchester County. YouthReach sponsors First Strings and Presto! violin lessons to all third graders as well as elementary school assembly programs in both counties.

Don't wait too long to secure your tickets for this exclusive event. Many who thought they could wait 'til the date found *It Ain't Necessarily So*. Tickets for concert and gala are \$175.00. Concert-only balcony tickets are \$25.00 each. For further information or to purchase tickets visit the CCM website at www.ChesapeakeChamberMusic.org, or call the CCM office at 410-819-0380.



Bob Burger and Anna Larkin, CCM 2012 Competition Co-Chairs

Behind the Scenes: Capturing the Sound



Darryl Kubian

by Carol Rizzoli Who is that dark-haired man in white athletic shoes moving silently around the stage before Chesapeake Chamber Music performances? It's Darryl Kubian, who records the concerts and will record the competition this March. He is setting up equipment, placing microphones, checking for balance, and of course monitoring the performance in progress.

Just a recording engineer? Hardly. Darryl plays in the first violin section of the New Jersey Symphony in addition to performing solo and in chamber ensembles. More, he composes, and his diverse credits include music for the Discovery Channel, CBS, Disney, and National Geographic films, among

many others. In 2008, his first composition for full orchestra, evoking the creation of the universe, was premiered by the New Jersey Symphony, Neeme Järvi conducting. Entitled "3-2-1," it met with critical acclaim and also pleased patrons. Scored for acoustic and electric violin and orchestra, the piece is based, Darryl explained one evening last summer over barbeque on our porch, on the Big Bang theory. It moves from expansion and inflation to explosion to a collapse into chaos, all in the first movement, to the emergence of humans in the second, and finally, "not to be too gloomy about it, to the end of our world."

Before that, Darryl released a solo CD, titled "String Theory," that features original music for violin and delves into the idioms of contemporary music-making. Darryl plays a 5-string electric violin on the album and is accompanied by an 18-piece string orchestra. His most recent project was a pair of DVDs dealing with illegal wildlife trade and habitat conservation efforts around the world for USAID and the Department of Defense.

Not surprisingly, Darryl comes from a musical family. He began piano lessons with his mother, "a fantastic teacher," at the age of four and then switched to violin at age five. "Probably," he says with a laugh because that was easier than studying with my own mother." He first tried his hand at composition at age ten, but did not begin composing in earnest until his university years. He holds a master's degree from Rutgers University, where he studied violin with Arnold Steinhardt, and composition.

How did he land on the Eastern Shore for the festivals? He met one of the festival's artistic directors, cellist Marcy Rosen who knew him as a violinist and was willing to give him a chance at recording festival concerts—and so he does.

Oh yes, this polymath in our midst also enjoys playing the theremin and is working on a composition for strings and this unusual instrument. An early electronic device, invented in 1919, it is played without being touched and emits those eerie sounds typical of sci fi films and also heard in rock and avant-garde music.

Right now, Darryl is working on a sound installation featuring cello, for an upcoming art show in Manhattan.

What do you do to relax? I asked him. "I'm always relaxing," he wrote back in an email. But seriously? "I really enjoy road cycling, hiking, camping, rappelling, and a good martini."

*Carol Rizzoli is the author of **The House at Royal Oak**, and an avid fan of chamber music.*

Chesapeake Chamber Music Competition Slated for March 31- cont.

It gives us great pleasure to present these five groups for the finals. It continues to give us great hope for the continued strong future of classical chamber music when we hear such high level of playing. I look forward to hearing the finals in Maryland, and getting a chance to meet these terrific players. I hope we will have a large, local audience to follow the competition, and the awarding of the Audience Prize."

Each ensemble will perform before a live audience and a panel of distinguished judges, including CCM Artistic Director Marcy Rosen; pianist Ursula Oppens, a three-time Grammy nominee and co-founder of Speculum Musicae; and David Jolley, a founding member of Orpheus Chamber Orchestra and one of the leading horn players of his generation. The prizes, which will be awarded at the end of the evening, are among the country's largest and include: Gold Medalist - \$10,000; Silver Medalist - \$5,000; and Audience Favorite

- \$500. In addition, each group will present an individual concert at other local venues, and the Gold Medalist will play at the 2012 Chesapeake Chamber Music Festival on June 15, 2012.

Tickets for the Competition may be purchased at the door of the Avalon Theatre the day of the performance and are \$10 (students are free). Come see the next generation of artists - it is the best buy in town!

Ursula Oppens



David Jolley



Marcy Rosen



Chesapeake Chamber Music Competition Announces Finalists

Axiom Brass Quintet

Praised for their "high level of musicality and technical ability" and for their "clean, clear and precise sound", the Axiom Brass Quintet has quickly established itself as "one of the major art music groups in brass chamber music." Winners of the 2008 International Chamber Brass Competition and the 2011 Fischhoff Educator Award, the quintet plays a repertoire ranging from Jazz and Latin music to string quartet transcriptions, as well as original compositions for brass quintet. The Axiom Brass Quintet is an Ensemble-in-Residence at the Music Institute of Chicago and at the Boston University Tanglewood Institute.



Sun-Silverstein-Lyon Trio

Based in New York, but bringing together a violinist studying at Colburn School's Conservatory of Music in Los Angeles with a cellist and a pianist in the Master of Music program at the Juilliard School, the trio formed during the summer of 2011 at the Kneisel Hall Chamber Music Festival. The group impressed the Kneisel faculty and audience with their performances of the Ravel and Schubert B-Flat Major piano trios.



Calidore String Quartet

Grand Prize and Gold Medal winner of the 2011 Fischhoff National Chamber Music Competition, the Calidore String Quartet brings a fiery brilliance to the concert stage. After performances this past year in the Midwest and on the West Coast, this summer the Calidore String Quartet will make its European debut at the Emilia Romagna Festival in Italy. Using an amalgamation of "California" and "dore", (golden), the ensemble's name represents a reverence for the diversity of culture and strong support it has received from its home base in California, the golden state.



Russian Trio

Sharing a Russian heritage, this trio playing violin, cello and piano was formed in 2011 at the Peabody Conservatory of the Johns Hopkins University. They have already performed extensively throughout the United States and internationally where they have won over audiences with exuberant and stirring performances.



Quartet LaMi

Formed in 2011, members of Quartet LaMi met at the University of California Los Angeles where they are currently all graduate students in violin, viola and cello. Members of the quartet have performed in masterclasses for the Calder, JACK, and Borrromeo Quartets.





Chamber Music's Top Ten

by Garry Clarke Last year, Anthony Tommasini, the chief music critic of *The New York Times*, published a list of his ten top classical music composers ("The Greatest," *The New York Times*, January 21, 2011). Tommasini acknowledged that such lists are subjective and problematic, but the project made him think long and hard about the achievements of many of the world's most important composers. Limits were imposed: composers considered were from the "cultivated" tradition of Western music; living composers were excluded. ("We are too close to living composers to have perspective.") Tommasini's final list: 1. Bach, 2. Beethoven, 3. Mozart, 4. Schubert, 5. Debussy, 6. Stravinsky, 7. Brahms, 8. Verdi, 9. Wagner, 10. Bartók.

Here is another list, this one the "Top Ten Most Famous Composers on the Internet:" 1. Mozart, 2. Bach, 3. Beethoven, 4. Chopin, 5. Wagner, 6. Vivaldi, 7. Schubert, 8. Schumann, 9. Liszt, 10. Brahms. Six of the composers are on Tommasini's list. Seven of the ten are connected to the nineteenth century. On both lists, there is no composer from a period earlier than the baroque. The most recent composer on the Internet list died over a century ago.

How would a list of the ten greatest classical chamber music composers compare to Tommasini and the Internet, I wondered? After much thought, I compiled a list. Once again, living composers were excluded. I am thinking of chamber music post-baroque (see my comments on Haydn). And, further, I decided that a top ten composer of chamber music should have produced a significant body of work. César Franck wrote one of the greatest violin sonatas in the literature, and his piano quintet is wonderful. Yet his chamber music output is small when compared to a number of other greats. This means that other famous names have been excluded for the same reason. I also considered the overall quality of the music and the distinctive voice of the composer. Some marvelous names are missing, for one reaches ten very quickly.

Here is my list:

1. Beethoven: Is there anything more sublime than Beethoven's late string quartets? But there are also the early and middle period quartets, string trios, piano trios, violin sonatas, cello sonatas, and pieces that involve winds. Most of these are transcendent pieces, without question.

2. Mozart: His output is as varied as Beethoven's, and there are many masterpieces, from string quartets and quintets, to sonatas and trios, to the sublime quintet for piano and winds. Mozart's number one Internet listing probably has something to do with his large chamber music output.

3. Haydn: He is in many ways responsible for chamber music as we know it today. The endless procession of string quartets is one of the wonders of music. The pieces with nicknames—Joke, Lark, Bird, Quinten, Emperor—are the famous ones. But there are many others, and they are gems.

4. Schubert: There are the string quartets and the two monumental piano trios. And the string quintet, the octet, and the "Trout" Quintet. But there is also the lovely little D major sonatina for violin and piano. Heavenly!

5. Brahms: Violin sonatas, cello sonatas, piano trios, piano quartets (that Hungarian finale to the g minor!), and the f minor piano quintet come to mind. Brahms was a formidable pianist, and one can tell from his music. Clarinetists have two late sonatas (and sometimes violists play these pieces). Oddly, I find the Brahms string quartets slightly less successful. But then there are the string sextets, not to mention the "Waldhorn" Trio.

6. Dvořák: I think that he is somewhat underrated. He had a distinctive voice early on (listen to the Piano Quintet, Op. 5), and whether it is a quartet (and not just the "American") or a piano trio (here the "Dumky" is a sublime example), or the bagatelles for string trio and harmonium, Dvořák is, as my students like to say, very excellent!

7. Bartók: His six string quartets are one of the cornerstones of the twentieth century. But there is more: the violin sonatas, the sonata for two pianos and percussion, and *Contrasts*, which will always be associated with Benny Goodman, who commissioned the work.

8. Hindemith: Here is another underrated composer. He understood chamber music and was an accomplished chamber musician. What woodwind quintet would not revel in the *Kleine Kammermusik*? There are sonatas for many different instruments. A friend recently said of the flute sonata, "It is a rewarding for a professional flutist to perform, but a high school flutist can also enjoy playing it." There are others: oboe, English horn, bassoon, trombone, tuba, and double bass, to name a few. If anyone is looking for a chamber work involving a heckelphone, check out the trio that Hindemith composed that includes the instrument. There are string quartets, too.

9. Shostakovich: His string quartets make a powerful statement, and there is a piano quintet and piano trios. His sonata for cello and piano is one of the monuments of the twentieth century chamber literature.

10. Ives: An utterly original and somewhat quirky composer, who may not have been as undisciplined as some critics have suggested. Ives produced two string quartets, four violin sonatas (enjoying a renaissance thanks to a recent recording by Hilary Hahn and Valentina Lisitsa), and a large body of chamber works for various forces that is a kaleidoscope of late nineteenth and early twentieth century America.

These are my thoughts, with apologies to Felix Mendelssohn, Robert Schumann, Debussy, Ravel, Poulenc, and probably a few others. I'm at gclarke2@washcoll.edu, and if you send me your comments, there could be an update.

Jazz Notes by Al Sikes

“Wonderful performances in an intimate setting.”

“The sound was perfectly modulated and the experience was memorable.”

“Excellent quality of ... musicianship.”

The reviews are in and the second annual Monty Alexander Jazz Festival was sublime.

The Festival began on Friday night of Labor Day Weekend with an elegant duet featuring Dominick Farinacci on the trumpet and Aaron Diehl on the piano. Their jazz conversation was both playful and rhythmic. Grace Kelly and her quintet followed. Grace, on the alto sax and vocals, took the audience across a range of jazz styles finishing up with *The Nearness of You*.

Saturday began out of doors at the Tidewater Inn with New Orleans jazz and then moved to the Avalon where Chuck Redd and Nate Najjar headlined a salute to Maryland's great jazz guitarist Charlie Byrd.

Monty Alexander and his quartet, on Saturday night, brought the audience to its feet with a rich blend of jazz, reggae and an especially memorable performance of the *Battle Hymn of the Republic*. Monty's concert concluded the Festival.

Chesapeake Chamber Music is exceedingly fortunate to be collaborating with a legendary jazz artist. His album *Harlem Kingston Express Live* has been nominated for a 2012 Grammy. And, his acclaim is international.

“In an age of anarchic and pretentious music, it's a relief to turn to Monty Alexander, a masterly pianist who delights audiences everywhere” (*London Evening Standard*)

“That ability to be expressive in unusual stylistic combinations is evident throughout *Uplift*. Alexander is percussive. He is lyrical. And sometimes almost simultaneously” (*The New York City Jazz Standard*)

2012 planning is well underway. The challenge: to match and then exceed. Stay tuned. What is certain is that this coming Labor Day weekend the Monty Alexander Jazz Festival will present a magical blend of jazz in a historic Chesapeake setting.





CHESAPEAKE CHAMBER MUSIC

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Save the Dates:

27th Annual Chesapeake Chamber Music Festival

June 3, 2012 through June 17, 2012

Tickets available for purchase in April 2012

To receive breaking news about the 27th Annual Festival sign up for the email newsletter on the CCM website at www.ChesapeakeChamberMusic.org.

We would like to keep you informed of the latest events in our growing series of year round programs. To help us reach you, please sign up on the website www.ChesapeakeChamberMusic.org.

Save the Dates

Chesapeake Chamber Music Competition

Saturday, March 31, 2012

at Easton's historic Avalon Theatre

Awards announced at the
conclusion of the performances.

Sunday, April 1, 2012

Concerts for Finalists

Axiom Brass Quintet • Quartet LaMi
 Russian Trio • Calidore String Quartet
 Sun-Silverstein-Lyon Trio

